

# Tax Limit Initiative Stirs Up State Lawmakers

By HENRY C. MACARTHUR  
Capitol News Service

SACRAMENTO — Proposition No. 9 on the November general election ballot is being eyed with a lot of misgivings on the part of legislators and others who are fearful the initiative might happen to pass and thereby throw governmental financing into a state of confusion.

The initiative is known as the "Watson Amendment," having been proposed originally by Philip E. Watson, Los Angeles County Assessor.

The ultimate objective of the amendment is to reduce property taxes in California, eventually to one percent of the market values of the property taxed.

It contemplates that property taxes for "people related" purposes, such as welfare and education, would be eliminated in 1973, and that the taxes for "property related" services of government would be reduced to the one per cent of market value. Provisions are made, however, for taxes to retire and fund bond issues.

Although exact figures are

the measures figure that on an average, the measure as written would reduce property taxes throughout the state by 50 per cent.

Politicians in general are opposing the amendment. Senators and assemblymen foresee in its adoption the almost immediate necessity of raising state taxes, including income and sales taxes, to finance both welfare and schools. It has been estimated an increase of 12 per cent in the sales tax rate and income tax increases to as much as 300 per cent would be necessary to make

up the property tax loss.

Opponents have termed the amendment a "tax trap," designed to snare the unwary into voting for it, and thereby causing an unprecedented upheaval in financing both state and local government.

In fact, there is so much concern over the amendment in legislative circles that Republicans and Democrats may compromise their differences during the veto session of the legislature, and request Governor Ronald Reagan to put the matter of property tax relief

on special call, which he has indicated he would do if there were any reasonable assurance that a property tax relief program could be adopted without a long legislative hassle.

The state's solons have been arguing property tax relief for almost two years now, without definitive action to put any kind of a program into effect to give measurable relief to the over-burdened property taxpayer. Various measures calling for ways and means of reducing this burden have been debated endless-

ly, and left to die.

However, the legislature now is up against the gun, for the simple reason that the people, through the initiative, have taken the matter into their own hands, and have an opportunity to vote on a property tax limitation which they never have had before. And opponents of the measure are fearful that the arguments for its passage will be so strong that it will be adopted and thereby upset the entire financial structure of the establishment.

The tax burden has

reached a point, it is generally agreed, where something must be done before the taxes become confiscatory, and this is the reason great pressure will be put on the legislature during the veto session, if the governor calls a special session, to give the taxpayers at least a modicum of relief in the hopes that this will negate the arguments for the Watson amendment.

If this is done, then the opponents can say property tax has been enacted and there is no necessity for passage of No. 9.

Your Right to Know Is the Key to All Your Liberties

## -Comment and Opinion-

TORRANCE, CALIFORNIA, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1968

### Schools Open Tomorrow

Summer's over. Not officially, but for nearly 40,000 Torrance youngsters tomorrow marks the end of summer.

Schools open here tomorrow throughout the city, marking the start of another academic year. For some youngsters, it will mean going to school for the first time. And for still others, tomorrow marks the beginning of the end of one part of their life.

Nearly a third of Torrance's 140,000 residents will be returning to classes during the next week—students in the public and private schools here, students who will go to colleges and universities throughout the nation, and adults who will take advantage of special evening classes offered by the Torrance schools.

Some will go because they have to, some because they want to.

To meet the educational needs of the community, the Torrance Unified School District will open five high schools, 36 elementary schools, and a school for handicapped youngsters. In addition, the district is a founding member of the Southern California Regional Occupational Center and, through arrangements with other districts in the area, provides a variety of special education programs.

Nine private and parochial elementary schools and Bishop Montgomery High School also serve the community, along with El Camino Junior College and the nearby Cal State Dominguez Hills.

The facilities are impressive, but past accomplishments of teachers and students are even more impressive.

High school graduates in the past five years have won more than \$1.2 million in scholarships (67 per cent go on to a two- or four-year college) and more than 40 awards through the National Merit Scholarship program. Special reading and language programs are offered in the elementary schools, and a central library contains nearly 500,000 books, films, and filmstrips.

Enrollment in the Torrance public schools has grown from something over 2,000 to an expected 34,499 in the past 20 years—and yet school officials have kept pace with the growth while expanding and improving the school program.

There is no teacher shortage here and because of good relations between the teachers' groups and the Board of Education, Torrance's teachers will be in the classrooms tomorrow, not on the picket lines.

The next nine months will find teachers, students, and parents working together to provide the best in educational opportunities for all segments of the community. It's a tribute to the educators, and most of all to the parents—the tutors and taxpayers who are as much a part of the system as the teachers.

Welcome back!

### Register — and Vote

Tomorrow is the deadline for voters to register in order to be eligible to vote in the Nov. 5 general election.

The ballot box is the very keystone of American democracy—for that is where the citizens make their wishes known and where they speak the loudest.

And 1968 may be one of the most important election years which this nation has faced. Beseated by troubles at home and abroad, this nation stands at a crossroads in her history. And her voters are the ones who must choose the direction she will travel in the years ahead.

But to make your voice heard, you must be registered to vote.

Basic requirements for voters are that they be 21 years of age, a citizen of the United States, residents of California for one year and of Los Angeles County for 90 days, and not have been convicted of a felony crime.

In addition, persons who have changed their name or residence since they last registered, or who wish to change their political affiliation must re-register. Persons who failed to vote in the 1966 general election also must re-register.

Deputy registrars will be on duty until 9 o'clock tonight and until 10 p.m. tomorrow at the Torrance City Hall. Other registrars will be on duty at locations throughout the city until the deadline.

There were 52,288 registered voters in Torrance for the June 6 pri-

mary election. But City Clerk Vernon W. Coil estimates as many as 70,000 persons may be eligible to vote here—which means some 12,000 persons are not registered at this time. And we suspect those same 12,000 persons are the ones who complain the loudest when things don't go their way.

The Press-Herald urges all those persons who are eligible to register today and tomorrow—and then vote Nov. 5.

### Drive Carefully

Those words of advice should be uppermost in the minds of motorists every time they climb into the car.

But at this time of year—as children throughout the city trek back to school—they bear repeating.

More than 35,000 youngsters will be on the city's streets each morning and afternoon on their way to and from school. Many will walk and others will ride bicycles or school buses. And none of them should become targets for careless drivers.

Be alert, especially during those critical hours just before and after school. And obeying the traffic laws isn't enough. Extra caution may slow you down a bit, but may even mean getting up 10 minutes earlier to get to work on time.

It's all worth it, though, for the life you save may be your son's or daughter's.

### Humphrey's Dumpty



ROYCE BRIER

### Pollsters Take Reading On War, Findings Fuzzy

A Harris Poll late last month showed 61 per cent of the Americans oppose cessation of bombing of North Vietnam, and 24 per cent in favor of cessation. Fifteen per cent were listed in the "not sure" column.

The poll was based on a sampling of 4,393 voters, which is something more than twice the normal sampling. It covered several related subjects. Poll critics aver the samplings are too limited, and certainly 4,393 out of 80 million voters is small enough, but possibly not inaccurate.

The chief objection to polls in this domain is not the minute sampling, but that the questions asked: (1) cover subjects too technical to be understood by the average citizen and (2) that questions overlap several related questions, which tax the pollsters themselves when they would analyze them.

In this, war polls and those dealing generally with

international affairs, differ entirely from political polls, which simply ask, do you prefer Joe Doakes or Joe Bush for the Presidency.

The part of the Harris poll noted seemed to uphold, in moderate degree, current maintenance of the current bombing pattern.

"Moderate degree," because any President waging

war, in our historical experience, should have 75-80 per cent support any course he and his military advisors may pursue. Sixty-one per cent can overnight be converted to 49 per cent by some untoward event in the war, which may have emotional impact, but is not necessarily an important moral or military development.

In any case, the figure quoted conflicts with others in the same poll, showing 54

per cent thought we should not be involved in Vietnam, while 84 per cent thought "we bombed our way into a bigger war than we had figured on."

This bespeaks a frustration with the war which led 63 percent of the sampling to give "negative marks" to Mr. Johnson's handling of the war.

But if 61 per cent oppose cessation of bombing while 63 favor on the President's war management, when a major factor in the President's management is unchanged bombing, how do you reconcile that?

You can only explain it by saying the polled voters didn't understand the questions put to them because they were out of their depth in them. You may call this by today's fashionable word, frustration, but a more descriptive word is simple bewilderment.

You can hardly blame them for the bewilderment. The questions, such as the one dealing with government in South Vietnam, involve complex military and political strategy in the entire area of Southeast Asia.

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### Morning Report:

Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago is not the most attractive personality around. He's overweight and he has jowl trouble on TV. But I don't see why he is blamed for stringing barbed wire around the Democratic convention hall. Or backing up the wire with police, national guardsmen, and Army troops.

After all, any number of self-appointed spokesmen had promised for months that the convention would be ruined. It seems to me that the wire and armed forces are an indictment of the protestors. Should the Mayor have allowed the impolite and the illegal to go their own riotous way?

The right to assemble and speak your piece is guaranteed. But this clearly applies to everybody—including those who have hired a hall for a meeting.

Abe Mellinkoff

### HERB CAEN SAYS:

## Tiny Tim Hair Secret Spilled

Tiny Tim, explaining his hairdo to Columnist Hank Grant: "I shampoo it with beer," and set it with pretzels? . . . H. A. Garcia, United Air Lines' sales mgr. in S'Jose, is announcing "For the first time, you can jet straight to Chicago, or travel straight through to Chicago, New York or Washington, WITHOUT leaving San Jose! Show me the way . . ."

The Harem on O'Farrell is now selling false hair for the man who doesn't quite have everything. . . . Jack Shelton, editor of the monthly Restaurant Guide (hey, he likes L'Odeon, too!) to Owen Spann on the air: "Waiters are like dogs—they know when you're afraid of them." Otherwise they lick your hand?

Protocol: Members of the Bolshoi Ballet, who danced here recently, have asked me through intermediary to deliver the following message: "We wish to thank the people of San Francisco for their hospitality and support. When we were in Los Angeles, we were trembling with anticipation, for San Francisco is our favorite city in all the world. However, we didn't dance well because we were so tired, and we didn't like the chopped-up program. For this we want to apologize." Check, and carbon copy to Pravda.

Bay City Beagle: Brian Taylor and Mel Lipman were about to attack their orders of lobster tails on the terrace of 33 Main St. on the Tiburon waterfront when they spied a couple of buddies at the bar. They went inside to say hello and when they returned—hello! no lobster tails. "You lost 'em to Heathcliff the Seagull," explained Owner Doc English. "That bird is the biggest thief in Marin." Two more lobster tails coming UP, and en garde.

A mess of dottage: Johnny Carson, caught in mid-boggle by Mrs. Lcu Brown during a discussion of American Indians: "Their plight is not as good as it should be." . . . And I'd just about given up on newspaper fillers when Ed Neher spotted this one in the Contra Costa Times: "Moths have such highly developed hearing organs that they can hear the supersonic impulses emitted by bats, and thus survive being eaten by them." But they'll never dance again. . . . Rick Barry, playing for the KYA softball team against Kaiser at Franklin Field in Oakland, hit six consecutive home runs, each one out of the park. The KYAs won 31-10, and maybe this isn't the pitchers' year after all.

Barrel's bottom: Roy Ice Follies Shipstad's daughter, Jill, a brown belt karate expert, and her husband, Newsman Bob Ellison, have written a book titled "This Book Can Save Your Life"—which tells ladies how to fend off attackers via chop-chop. I'm especially taken with a photo showing Jill applying knee to the groin and knuckles to the nose of a hapless male assailant, over the saucy caption: "Double Your Pleasure!" . . . The National Basketball Association's manager of officials, interviewed on the telly: "These pro referees are tops and there is very little I can add to what they already don't know."

In Washington recently our Mayor got off Another Good One. He met with the California Congressional contingent in a room that was so crowded and noisy that at one point Congr. Phil Burton complained: "Gad, I can't even hear myself talk." "Don't worry, Phil," cat-grinned the Mayor, "you're not missing a thing."

I don't think the John Birch Society, for all its "Support Your Local Police" stickers, like cops any more than do those who call them "pigs." If they did, they would support the social reforms that would make a policeman's lot a happier one; instead they oppose the very measures that would bring a semblance of peace to the "hot" cities. Asidem: I was sitting at Enrico's late the other night with a distinctly non-piggish cop when a guy wheeled his Cadillac into a yellow zone. I glanced at the "Support Your Local Police" sticker on the Cad's bumper and said "What now?" "Those phonies," snorted the cop. "They think that sticker'll keep us from giving 'em a tag. Watch." Tagsville.

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